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MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

HOW TO FIND INFORMATION ABOUT ADA

On July 26, 1990 President George Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA is a comprehensive civil rights law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. For over 43,000,000 Americans who have physical or mental disabilities, ADA is a declaration of equality.

ADA is a beginning, a foundation for creating employment opportunities, removing architectural barriers and improving communications systems for people with disabilities. No, it will not happen overnight. It will be a slow process for people to learn about the law and understand the rules. It will also be a slow process for the agencies who have to explain the act to employers, employees, people administering housing projects and the general public. The good news is that it is happening!

For people seeking information about this act, ADA is formally known as Public Law 101-336, 101st Congress. The law gives rule-making authority to federal agencies. As federal agencies write their regulations, they are printed in the *Federal Register* and later compiled in the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Other agencies such as the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission, and the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Office on Americans with Disabilities Act are distributing publications that explain the act and responding to questions. An Americans With Disabilities Act Info Center has been established in each of the eight federal

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COME TO OUR CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

The MILP Christmas Open House will be December 18 from 1 to 3:30. Everyone is welcome! Come meet our staff, learn about our programs, have some refreshments, and enjoy our Christmas hospitality!

We are located at 38 South Last Chance Gulch in the Dunphy Block. Parking is available in the city parking lot at the corner of Broadway and Park. You can enter at the back door or the door on the walking mall and follow the signs to MILP.

Merry Christmas



regions. In Montana, several state agencies and the independent living centers are working together to collect information and respond to questions about ADA. If you have questions or want further information, contact one of the following information sources:

Montana Independent Living Project

MILP is a cross-disability service agency that provides assistance to Montanans with disabilities. Our

Continued on Page 2

purpose is to promote the development, improvement and expansion of community-based services which directly facilitate the independence, productivity and quality of life for people with disabilities. ADA will provide support for our goal of helping people who are disabled strive to be independent. We have watched ADA from the beginning, tracked its progress, lobbied for it, and celebrated when it became law. Now we will work with others, locally and regionally, to support the successful implementation of ADA.

MILP's library is collecting information on ADA including the law, federal rules, related publications, and information resources. For more information, contact Raelen Williard, Information Specialist.

Montana's Vocational Rehabilitation Office

Montana's Vocational Rehabilitation Office is working in concert with Independent Living Centers, the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and other state agencies to ensure positive implementation of ADA in Montana. They have staff members in each of their four district offices (Billings, Butte, Great Falls and Missoula) to provide technical assistance, particularly in Title I, which is related to employment.

Specifically, Vocational Rehabilitation will: 1) provide job-ready qualified workers who have been evaluated and trained by the agency; 2) assist employers in analyzing job tasks and recommend necessary accommodations when necessary; 3) help employers understand the nature of disabilities and the functional limitation of individuals with disabilities; and 4) generally be available to speak or assist local groups in the implementation of ADA.

For more information, contact Bob Maffit, Vocational Rehabilitation, PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604; phone: 406-444-2590.

Region 8 ADA Info Center: Meeting the Challenge

The Region 8 ADA InfoCenter project, called Meeting the Challenge, was established in October 1991 to provide people in Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming) with information to encourage the successful implementation of ADA. They plan to establish a comprehensive local and regional network to disseminate information and provide related services to the business and disability communities. For more information, contact Meeting the Challenge, Inc., 3630 Sinton Road, Suite 103, Colorado Springs, CO 80907-5072; phone 719-444-0252 or 800-735-4ADA or 800-735-4232.

ST. VINCENT'S PROVIDES SPECIAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

St. Vincent's Hospital and Health Center is in the process of opening a new skilled nursing unit in the Hospital. The unit functions as a bridge between the hospital and the patient's home.

If they admit someone to this unit with impaired sensory or speaking skills, they are now able to provide communications assistance. The Hospital has a telecommunications device for the deaf/teletypewriter (TDD/TTY) available for use and all patient room phones in the skilled nursing unit will have volume controls for the hearing impaired.

St. Vincent's new TDD/TTY telephone number is 406-657-7061.

FOCUS is a newsletter for people interested in the development, improvement and expansion of community-based services which directly facilitate the independence, productivity and quality of life for people with disabilities. It is published four times a year by Montana Independent Living Project.

Staff: Zana Smith, Executive Director **Raelen Williard,** Editor

Board of Directors: Kathy Collins, President; Sandy Armstead, John Camper, Cecelia Cowie; Pat Domme; Sally Franklin; Lee Harrison; John Shea; and Jon Williamson.

Inquiries, comments and changes of addresses should be addressed to: **FOCUS**, Montana Independent Living Project, 38 South Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601; 406-442-5755 or 800-735-MILP (800-735-6457).

WHAT'S NEW AT MILP...

Staff Changes

Our Deputy Director, Tim Harris, left in August to accept a position as a Special Education Manager at the Montana Office of Public Instruction. In his new position, he will have the opportunity to travel to all parts of Montana and work with schools that have special education programs to ensure that they are in compliance with federal and state laws. Tim was with MILP for 5 years and was knowledgeable in many areas, including housing, transportation, advocacy, consumer affairs, and state and federal legislation. We'll miss his expertise and especially miss him as our capable editor of *Focus*.

Carla Thompson, our administrative assistant left MILP at the end of October to move to Chinook. For the past two years, she efficiently handled the computers, phone calls, newsletter mailings, meeting minutes, bowling trips, and lots more! We'll all miss her smile and sense of humor. We wish both Carla and Tim the best of luck!

Melinda Pullen has replaced Carla Thompson as administrative assistant. Melinda is a long time Helena resident. Before coming to MILP she worked at the Montana Department of Justice. She says that her three children (Alex, 7, Gina-Rae, 5 and Alex, 2) keep her busy in her hours away from MILP.

Raelen Williard was hired in October as an Information Specialist. She will be responding to information requests and coordinating information projects. Prior to joining the MILP staff, Raelen had over 15 years' experience in providing information services in special libraries and private business. She has an eight-year-old son and likes to hike and cross country ski.

A New Look

Independent Living Specialists, Sandy Fadness and Les Clark, now have offices in our newly acquired space next door to our current office. We will still use the same entrance as before. New carpet completes our new look.

Come meet our new staff and see our office changes

at our Christmas open house on December 18. (See article on page 1.)

RECREATION PROGRAM PROVIDES YEAR ROUND ACTIVITIES

Recreation for our consumers is a large part of our program. Last summer's activities were picnics, a ride on the tour train, a trip to the circus and circus parade, a pontoon fishing trip on Canyon Ferry Lake, and visits to the wildlife zoo, the Historical Society Museum, and the fair.

During the fall, winter, and spring, the Helena Presents Series donates tickets for their programs so that our consumers can attend a variety of concerts, musicals, and presentations. Another winter activity is a hay ride through Helena with our consumers singing Christmas carols.

Our main activity is bowling every Wednesday from September to the end of May. With our bowling group, we celebrate Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. We end the bowling season in May with a tournament and a party to present awards and celebrate all the birthdays of the year.

For more information on the Recreation Program, contact Fran Kerttula.

A & A CONSTRUCTION BUILDS AN ACCESSIBLE HOME

Mark and Denise Aafedt of A & A Construction in Bozeman are nearing completion of a house in Bozeman that will be accessible for someone with disabilities. In building the house, Mark made sure that all hallways and doorways were wide enough for a wheel chair and provided ramps at the entrances. The kitchen and bath plans were reviewed and adapted for accessibility and include a special shower in the bath.

Mark says that he will work with customers to custom design a home to meet specific needs for accessibility. For more information on building or remodeling projects, contact Mark or Denise Aafedt, A & A Construction, 303 North Yellowstone, Bozeman, MT 59715 406-587-0978.

PEER HELPER PROGRAM BEGINS EIGHTH YEAR

The MILP Peer Helper Program has been in existence for over seven years. Based on a model developed through the University of Arkansas, it is designed to strengthen the community support network for people with disabilities and their significant others. The basic concept of the program is to encourage people who have experienced a disability to offer their skills and experience adjusting to those encountering similar adjustment challenges. The Peer Helpers provide emotional support, positive role modeling, assistance with problem solving and conflict resolution and information on resources.

Peer Helpers are people who have experienced a disability themselves or in a significant other for at least two years. In addition, Peer Helpers are individuals who:

- Have come to terms with their disability,
- Live independently in the community,
- Possess good communication & problem solving skills, and
- Have satisfactorily completed a 10-hour Peer Helper Training Program.

Peer Helpers work for MILP under the supervision of the program coordinator. They are paid an hourly wage plus travel expenses. Some choose to work only on a volunteer basis. They often work full-time somewhere else, too. They share their wealth of knowledge and experience to help others.

Les Clark, an Independent Living Specialist, coordinates the MILP Peer Helper program. Les says peer helping is a naturally occurring process of people who have experienced difficulties in their lives reaching out to help others in similar situations. This process has been formalized at MILP to provide training, financial assistance, and support to the people who are trying to help others. Establishing a program also helps to identify people with disabilities in rural areas and provide them with the support that they need.

Les believes the program benefits many people. He says consumers benefit because the program encourages independence, increases coping skills, teaches self advocacy, and provides good role models. For

Peer Helpers, the program often improves self confidence and increases feelings of self worth. Les says the program presents positive images of people with disabilities to others in the community. He thinks the Peer Helper program is especially valuable in rural areas where a person with a disability may feel isolated and alone without contact with other people with a disability.

For more information on the Peer Helper Program, call Les Clark at MILP.

RADIO READING SERVICES OFFERED

Radio Reading Services endorse the concept that all people, including those with disabilities, have a need and the right to news and information which will enable them to participate more fully and independently in society.

A team of volunteers reads selections from daily and weekly newspapers. Other broadcasts include readings from national newspapers or magazines. In Western and Central Montana the materials are broadcast through an agreement with KUFM/KGPR Public Radio. The broadcast area covers Missoula and most of the valley north to Ronan and south to Hamilton. The signal is also available in Big Fork, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, White Sulphur Springs, and Whitefish. In Eastern Montana, broadcasts originate from the Montana Center for Handicapped Children on the Eastern Montana College campus. Communities in Southeast Montana and Northern Wyoming that are being served by KEMC translator stations may receive the Radio Reading Service as well.

If you qualify for the program, you will receive a special radio, a closed circuit receiver, on loan and free of charge for as long as it is needed. For more information on how to apply for the program or how to be a volunteer reader, contact: Radio Reading Service for Western and Central Montana, 924 South 3rd West, Missoula, Montana 59801; Phone: (406) 721-1998 or 1-800-942-7323; OR Eastern Montana Radio Reading Service, 1500 North 30th Street, Billings, Montana 59101-0298; Phone: (406) 657-2337.

DISABLED CHILDREN AND ADULTS LEARN TO SKI

Eagle Mount is a non-profit therapeutic recreation program based in Bozeman that offers programs to the disabled. Eagle Ski, now in its 9th year, enables people of all ages and disabilities to experience down-hill and cross skiing at Bridger Ski Area and Bohart Ranch, north of Bozeman. As well as the therapeutic aspects, participants are introduced to the challenge, socialization and enjoyment of the sport of skiing. Individuals learn to ski with the use of adaptive equipment and instruction from volunteers trained in adaptive ski techniques. Involved in the program are participants with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, visual impairments, amputations, spinal cord injuries, and developmental disabilities.

The eight-week program runs January 22, 1992 through March 16, 1992. The two hour lessons are offered Monday through Sunday. Each student skis one day a week and is provided with the necessary adaptive equipment, lift ticket, and lesson.

Two satellite programs offer skiing for a wider area, one at Red Lodge Mountain serving the Billings area and a program at Showdown Ski Area serving Great Falls.

The Eagle Ski Program is a tremendous opportunity to share the joy of skiing with those who are physically and developmentally challenged. For more information concerning participation, volunteering, sponsorship and/or financial support, please contact Lee or Debi at Eagle Mount, 6901 Goldstein Lane, Bozeman, MT 59715 Phone: (406) 586-1718.

MS SUPPORT GROUP

The MS Support Group will continue to meet next year if enough people are interested. Anyone who wants to participate should contact Claudia Driscoll at 442-5533 after January 1, 1992.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SEEKS COMMENTS ON HOUSING

On November 28, 1990, President Bush signed the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act. A key element in the implementation of this act is a new requirement for the preparation of a state housing plan called the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy or CHAS. The Montana CHAS must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a prerequisite to receipt of several HUD housing and community development programs.

In November, the Montana Department of Commerce (DOC) released the CHAS, which is intended to encourage a comprehensive and coordinated approach to implementing specific federal and state housing programs. It focuses on the housing needs of low and moderate income persons and families, homeless persons and families, and individuals with special housing needs who require supportive services.

The DOC is holding a series of six public hearings. The first two hearings were held in Havre and Glasgow in November. The remaining hearings will be held at the following locations: 1) **Miles City:** December 3, 1:15 p.m. at Miles City Community College, 2715 Dickinson, Room 106; 2) **Bozeman:** December 5, 1:15 p.m. at Bozeman City Hall, 411 East Main, City Commission Room; 3) **Missoula:** December 11, 1:15 p.m. at Missoula City Hall, 435 Ryman Street, City Hall Chambers; and 4) **Helena:** December 17, 1:15 p.m. at 1400 Broadway, Room C-209, Cogswell Building.

The DOC is seeking comments prior to finalizing this initial CHAS. They are encouraging interested persons to share their thoughts in person or in writing. For more information, contact Gus Byron, Program Manager, Community Development Block Grant Program, Montana Department of Commerce, Cogswell Building, Room C-211, Helena, MT 59620, phone (406) 444-2488.

1991 TBI INDEPENDENCE SEMINAR

- The 1991 Independence Seminar for persons with traumatic brain injury (TBI) was held September 16-21, 1991 at the Feathered Pipe Ranch near Helena. Nine individuals from Helena and Bozeman participated in the seminar, which addressed problems affecting the quality of life for persons with brain injury.
- Individual conferences and group sessions focused on life management, self-advocacy, grief, substance abuse, nutrition, and interpersonal relationships. Leisure activities were an important component of the seminar. The seminar participants enjoyed activities such as hiking, fishing, Missouri River rafting, bowling, and horseback riding.
- The seminar was a successful and wonderful learning experience for all who attended. Everyone benefited from the peer group support and quality staff involvement. We look forward to another seminar next year!

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1-800-735-MILP (6457)

1-800-735-6457

FOR SALE: Electric wheelchair— Everson-Jennings, 3P; Adult slim; Contact Bill Jones, 2733 Green Briar Drive, Great Falls, MT 59404; 453-1269.



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Kathy Collins - President; Pat Domme; Jim Spall; Chuck Petersen; Sally Franklin; Jon Williamson;
Sandy Armstead; John Shea; Cecelia Cowie; and Zana Smith - Executive Director.

EDITOR: TIM HARRIS

ADA TASK FORCE

Bob Maffit of Rehabilitative Services and Tim Harris of MILP have been planning a meeting of agencies and individuals who have an interest in the process ADA has been going through. One hoped-for outcome of this meeting is an agreement of responsibilities for agencies regarding technical assistance responses to questions about ADA and the regulations currently in the development stage. The meeting is scheduled for Helena in mid May. Portions of ADA go into effect as early as January, 1992, which is not far off.

In order for us as service providers and advocates for the rights of people who have disabilities, a clear understanding of the law and its regulations, as well as open lines of communication among consumers, service providers, the business community, and the public, will be necessary for advancing the cause of disability rights. We all have a responsibility to participate in our local communities. We must be able to identify areas where education is needed to affect attitude change. We must be willing to work together for the successful implementation of ADA. And we can make it happen.

BARRIER AWARENESS WEEK MAY 6 - 12, 1991

Montana Awareness Week will be May 6th through May 12th, marking the fifth year of Barrier Awareness Week in Montana. There will be a number of presentations on barriers to schools, plus proclamations from the Governor's office and the City of Helena. There will be television and radio presentations on barriers also. Dennis Iverson, Director of the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, has volunteered to go about one work day during BAW using a wheelchair. The Department of Administration also encourages state government officials and employees to engage in activities and discussions on barriers to people who are disabled. MILP will be hosting meetings in four communities to discuss issues in the delivery of rural health and related services. The Department of State Lands will have a wheelchair to its employees. The DSL occupies a building with two floors and will share the chair, upstairs for the morning, then downstairs for the afternoon. The following day, staff will meet to discuss issues they encountered. The Deaf Relay Service, operated by AT&T, will go on-line May 9th, giving persons with telephone impairments access to telecommunications (see related article in another part of the FOCUS).

The year will come when it will not be necessary to conduct Barrier Awareness Week. Hopefully, it will be in our lifetime. In the meantime, **DOWN WITH THE BARRIERS, UP WITH ACCESS!**

10th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Project is planning a picnic celebration for August 3, at Sheepshead Recreation Area in the Deer Lodge National Forest in Elk Park. Sheepshead has a designated recreational area for people with disabilities. The Special Events Committee is working on a variety of fun activities designed to keep us busy and entertained the whole day long. It has limited space and consequently we need to know how many folks might attend in order for us to plan the activities accordingly. If you are interested in celebrating the day with us, please call us at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457. See you at the Sheepshead on the 3rd.

DISABILITIES ACT: EXPAND DINING ACCESS FOR "WHEELCHAIR-BOUND" (sic)

(Editor's note: this article appeared in a recent issue of "Nation's Restaurant News." The issue of the "News" in which this article appeared was shared with us by a local inn keeper). WASHINGTON - A federal agency has proposed all restaurants built after January, 1992, be required to make 5 percent of their seats accessible to wheelchair-bound persons.

The recommendations would also oblige a new place to use a dining room design that permits disabled persons to move through at least two-thirds of the area.

Other suggestions would set standards for such design features as the maximum depth of carpet piling (a half inch).

The regulatory proposals issued by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board are the first of many that the federal government is required to promulgate under the ADA. The landmark measure mandates the removal by restaurants and other public places of most design features that can impede a disabled employee or patron.

The Compliance Board has estimated that its recommendations would raise construction costs by less than 1 percent. However, neither the Justice Department nor the Equal Opportunity Commission has submitted their regulatory proposals, which could further raise the cost of complying with the ADA.

The Justice Department has another six months in which to release its suggestions, which, like the Compliance Board's recommendations, deal with ways of making commercial places accessible to disabled customers.

The EEOC's recommendations will specify what employers must do to prevent handicapped workers from being hampered at their job sites. The ADA specified such possibilities as requiring businesses to hire sign-language interpreters for deaf employees.

The law gives the Compliance Board, the EEOC and Justice a great deal of leeway in translating the ADA's broad intentions into specific rules and regulations. For instance, the measure mandates that employers make "reasonable accommodations" yet leaves the term largely undefined.

Similarly, the law exempts businesses from requirements that would pose an "undue hardship" but defines the phrase in very general terms.

Fearing that the industry would be saddled with unreasonable responsibilities, the National Restaurant Association convened a meeting last September with representatives from Justice and the EEOC. Also present were executives from several hotel and restaurant chains. The group spent half a day discussing the ADA and what it could mean for restaurants.

The NRA has not yet responded to the Compliance Board's regulatory proposals. The Association as well as individual businesses and citizens have until March 25 to submit comments. (Editor's comment: unlike the various transportation associations which convulsed over potential problems with ADA and its regulations, it doesn't sound like the Restaurant Association folks are overreacting to the regs being proposed. It might not be a bad idea for us to recognize positive efforts from our favorite eating establishments).

MARTHA, WHO'S ON THE LINE? ALL I HEAR IS FUNNY BEEPING!

In a letter dated April 8, Dan Pouliot, Director of the Montana Telecommunications for the Telephone Handicapped Program, announced that the long-awaited Dual Party Relay Service for persons whose disability interferes with telephone use. This is the second phase of the MTTH Program. Phase one is the on-going distribution of TDDs to persons with telephone impairments and training in their use. As of April, 1991, more than 300 individuals have been trained in the use of TDD equipment. The relay service will be the link between telephone-impaired individuals and people who are not hearing impaired. The service will be provided by operators who will relay typewritten and spoken dialog between two parties. This will open telephone communications for people with TDDs to the world without reliance on other types of assistance as in the past.

American Telephone and Telegraph has been selected by the Montana Telecommunications Committee to provide this new relay service. AT&T will be offering services to Montana residents on May 9th, the same day Governor Stephens will make relay calls to Dr. King Jordan, President of Gaullaudet College in Washington, D.C., Mrs. Flo Ellen Hippe, President of the Montana Association of the Deaf, and Mr. Ben Hadvahl, President of the Montana Self Help for Hard of Hearing residents in the state.

The Montana relay center is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, and is operational 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Please note the following numbers: TDD users will dial **1-800-253-4091** to reach AT&T communications assistants at the relay center. Calls can be initiated by voice users by dialing **1-800-253-4093**. **Remember those numbers!** It is estimated that within three years, AT&T will handle as many as 8,000 relay calls per month for Montana residents. Users of the Montana relay service will not be billed for calls placed in their local service area. Charges for long distance calls will be billed at regular calling rates paid by others.

People will have the option of speaking directly to the other party through a special feature of the system known as a voice carry-over. In cases where a person can speak but cannot hear, a relay operator is needed only to type spoken responses from the other party. Speech impaired persons similarly will be able to listen to the conversation from the other party and then use the relay operator to voice their typed conversation by using hearing carry-over.



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An electric bike/wheelchair for sale.
\$500 without batteries, \$600 with.
Contact Merril at 761-2246.

E & J Adult wheelchair, desk arms,
swing away footrests, in good shape, for
\$200. Call Marvel at 656-6813.

IS YOUR LIFT RECREATION UPDATE

BOWLING LEAGUE NEWS

The Bowling League is winding down its season. May 22nd marks the final session of the season. It was another success, with bowlers showing steady improvement during the course of the year. The troops will move on to more outdoorsy fare for the summer months. Plans include a picnic at Lewis & Clark County Fairgrounds on June 12th, a trip down the Missouri River through the Gates of the Mountains on June 26th, a fishing trip on July 10th and an appearance in the last Chance Stampede Parade at the end of July. More events will be planned for August.

WATER SKI CLINIC

Last August, LeRoy Monson of Magic in Motion traveled to Helena to put on a water skiing demonstration at Holter Lake. This July, LeRoy is returning to participate again with more water skiing. The event is scheduled to take place July 20th & 21st in the Helena Valley at a private lake being developed by Tom Hanson. Tom is a local water ski professional and quite accomplished in his field. The event was very successful and well received last year. We hope to achieve the same or even greater level of success this year. For more information, call the MILP office at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457.

TOLL-FREE NUMBERS AT STATE AGENCIES

Agricultural Assistance Program

Farm Hotline 800-722-3276

Commerce-Business Assistance Division ..

800-221-8015

Citizen Advocate

800-322-2272

Health and Environmental Sciences -

Open Burning Restrictions 800-225-6779

Statewide Road Report

800-332-6172

Judiciary - Water Court Operations

800-624-3270

Legislative Information

during the Session 800-237-5079

Livestock Crime Stoppers

800-647-7464

Montana State Library -

Blind and Physically Handicapped 800-332-3400

Medicaid Providers Billing Information ...

800-624-3958

These numbers are available as a service to us. If you need to call any of the above agencies or departments, **use** the toll-free numbers, especially if you have a caseworker you feel like torching. You may want to check on any open burning restrictions in effect!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE TDDs GONE?

The following state offices have TDDs Available:

Governor's Office 444-3468; 1-800-332-2272

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks ... 444-1200

(this TDD is connected to a printer and takes messages only. Appropriate personnel will return calls.)

Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services

Billings District Office 252-5601

Bozeman District Office 587-0601

Butte District Office 723-6537

Great Falls District Office 727-7740

Havre District Office 265-6933

Helena District Office 443-1006

Kalispell District Office 755-5408

Miles City District Office 232-0538

Missoula District Office 721-4910

Montana State Hospital 693-7158

Art Hart, State Office 444-2590

Dan Pouliot, State Office 444-5622

Department of State Lands

Lands Division 444-4596

Central Management Division 444-2016

Field Operation Division 444-4979

Secretary of State 444-5376

(this number is available for three months prior to statewide elections and is located in the Election Bureau.)

These TDD systems are in place now and available for your use. Anytime you have a need to contact one of these agencies, please take advantage of the service. They are for you.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SEMINAR PLANNED FOR FALL

MILP is sponsoring an Independent Living Seminar for persons with traumatic brain injury. This seminar will be held September 16th through the 21st, 1991 at the Feathered Pipe Ranch near Helena.

Informational presentations covering grief and loss, nutrition, sexuality, interpersonal relationships, and self advocacy are included. There are a variety of recreational opportunities offered at the Ranch and in the community. The seminar is adapted to individual needs, yet focuses on peer group support.

For more information about the Seminar or to answer any question you may have, please contact Sandy McCormick at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457.

RWJ JUGGERNAUT OFF AND ROLLING

On March 11th and 12th, the Advisory Committee to MILP's RWJ grant for Improving Health and Supportive Services for People with Disabilities met at the Copper King in Butte. In attendance were Joe Murphy, Rehabilitative Services from Butte, Rene O'Reilly, West Mont Home Management Services in Helena, Roger Ala, Area Agency on Aging in Helena, Bob Johnson, Lewis & Clark County Health, Ann Johnson, Long Term Care Specialist from Bozeman, Archie Lake, Worker's Compensation in Helena, Cecilia Cowie, Secondary Disabilities Prevention in Helena, Tom Seekins, Rural Institute in Missoula, Mike Hagen, St. Vincent's Hospital in Billings, Greg Olson, DDPAC in Helena, Joe Mathews, Rhabilitative Services in Helena, Tom Osborn, NCILS in Great Falls, and Kathy Collins, Pat Domme, Jon Williamson, and Chuck Petersen from MILP's Board of Directors. Staff members also attended.

The direction MILP is heading in at this point with the grant is the development of a marketing plan which will establish our focus for seeking funder groups and organizations which will help build our financial base. We will also be developing a business plan for moving into a commercial type of endeavor. One of our goals is to establish a financial base which will assist us in being less dependent on government grants.

As more develops, we will keep you informed. Stay tuned.



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New 800 Number!

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BE A FOCUS SUBSCRIBER

We are looking for subscribers to help us with the costs of publishing the newsletter. If you feel it is important to you, please fill out the form below and return to: MILP, 38 S. Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601. Thanks for your support.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- Yes, I can support FOCUS. Enclosed is my donation of: \$15 \$25 \$5
- Yes, I support FOCUS, but cannot give anything at this time.
- Please remove my name from the mailing list

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MILP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Collins - President; Pat Domme; Jim Spall; Chuck Petersen; Sally Franklin; Jon Williamson;
Sandy Armstead; John Shea; Cecelia Cowie; and Zana Smith - Executive Director.

EDITOR: TIM HARRIS

FOCUS ON... PLEASE RETURN

In rural areas, we find people with disabilities functioning with what is called pathological gratitude, in regard to health care professionals showing up to provide services. This gratitude shows itself in a "we're so happy that you're here, we don't care about the quality, appropriateness, or frequency of your services" kind of attitude. It's not unlike being held hostage. This same gratitude applies to the area of our (people with disabilities) expertise and experience in the field of accessibility. People who are disabled have times too numerous to count have been asked to donate their expertise on disability issues to groups, organizations, government agencies, and other parties who are developing programs to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. With pathological gratitude that someone is making their program accessible, we fall all over ourselves giving away our knowledge.

How come we are always expected to give away our knowledge, expertise, etc., as lawyers do, "pro bono?" When was the last time you visited your dentist and were greeted "Oh, I am so happy you came in, so excited, in fact, that I won't charge you for any work I do?" Have you ever heard of a contractor so thrilled over the fact that you want to build a house that he will do it free? Doubtful, I'd guess. At MILP, we get requests to provide technical assistance to projects that deal with issues relating to disability. Occasionally, the requestor suggests that a representative from MILP volunteer to participate on a task force, committee, or other group to be technical advisors on accessibility. We like to follow such a request with "we work for a fee" and listen for a response. Some of the time we hear that the caller will get back to us, and then never does. Some of the time we get silence, then "ok." And some of the time we get an up-front "that's fine." I believe that those who have paid for our technical expertise would be the first to admit that is was money well spent.

What I am trying to sort out is this: why do we give away our technical expertise? Our knowledge about disability issues is valuable, having been gained over a period of years of "on the job" experience. We should be able to put a dollar amount on our worth when it comes to providing technical assistance. It is time for us to stop giving our knowledge away in situations where the requestor has the ability to pay for our assistance. Pathological gratitude has no place in the ILC. Those of us associated with the ILCs, either as paid staff or as consumers, have varying levels of expertise and information valuable to the public at large. When we are asked to participate with groups, agencies, etc., we should expect to be paid for our services, no less than an architect, contractor, doctor, dentist, or laborer would be. You are a valuable resource to the community.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SEMINAR PLANNED FOR FALL

MILP is sponsoring an Independent Living Seminar for persons with traumatic brain injury. This seminar will be held September 16th through the 21st, 1991 at the Feathered Pipe Ranch near Helena.

Informational presentations covering grief and loss, nutrition, sexuality, interpersonal relationships, and self advocacy are included. There are a variety of recreational opportunities offered at the Ranch and in the community. The seminar is adapted to individual needs, yet focuses on peer group support.

For more information about the Seminar or to answer any question you may have, please contact Sandy McCormick at 442-5755 or 1-800-735-6457.

4 SAIL, or FOUR SALE, OR FOR SAIL, WHATEVER!!

Apex Medical in Helena has a hospital bed, manual, for the first one who comes to haul it away. Call them at 449-2739.

Ron of Sheridan is looking for a newer lift equipped van. He has an older one and it needs replacing. If you have what Ron needs, give him a call at 842-5963.

2 wheelchairs: 1 power, 1 manual. Power is an older Invacare, with twin motors, direct drive with knurled drive wheels (large and small), extra set of new tires, battery charger and new dry cell, long range acid battery (good chair for indoors or outdoors in good weather only) for \$500. Manual is an older E & J, steel frame, folding, pneumatic tires on heavy duty plastic rims for \$100. Both chairs are blue seats and back with chrome frame. Call Eric at 586-1204 in Bozeman.

Diane would like to buy a second hand light weight wheelchair with pneumatic wheels. She can be reached at 449-8764.

CONFERENCE CORNER

4th ANNUAL MONTANA HEAD INJURY CONFERENCE

The fourth annual Montana Head Injury Conference will be held September 13-15, 1991, at Bozeman's Holiday Inn. Speakers for the conference include Senator Max Baucus, Attorney General Marc Racicot, and Dr. George Zitany, President of the National Head Injury Foundation.

A pig roast is planned at Eagle Mount on Friday evening, September 13, where there will be a demonstration of "hippotherapy" (horseback riding therapy) and entertainment by Bozeman's "Schlechten Symphonic Sauerkraut German Band."

Topics to be covered at the three day conference include use of computers in rehabilitation, the special problems of educating children with head injuries, and extended care and rehabilitation of the head injured.

The Montana Head Injury Association was founded in 1987 and now has over 200 members, according to John McCulloch of Bozeman, a member of the Board of Directors. Membership includes persons who

HANDICAP PARKING: PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

After many years of advocacy work by various individuals and organizations, Congress passed the Uniform System of Handicap Parking law on November 9, 1988. The need for such a law was documented by an earlier study by the Department of Transportation (DOT), which reported on the parking problem and the inconsistencies in the handicap parking laws among the states. Great headway has been made in bringing these problems to the attention of both state and federal governments.

The DOT study done in the mid-'80's noted that a common problem faced by disabled motorists traveling outside their state of residence was receiving citations for parking their vehicles in designated handicap parking spaces. The citation was the result of a state or jurisdiction not honoring another state's handicap identification.

The study noted that only 15 states grant total reciprocity, recognizing all handicap insignias, regardless of the state of issue. Thirty-four other states and the District of Columbia had limited reciprocity, honoring only the states they had written agreements with. This was confusing for the traveler as well as for the various police departments.

On March 11, 1991, DOT published their ruling on a uniform system for handicap parking. This was delegated to handicap parking. This was delegated to the Federal Highway Administration and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, who appointed 14 organizations to the Handicapped Parking Regulatory Negotiation Advisory Committee. Their goal was to identify the major issues, gauge their importance, and develop workable regulations.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) was a major participant of this committee. Their contribution was made by the late R. Dennis Smurr, a longtime advocate for the handicap parking issue. The final report to DOT, also published in the March 11, 1991, *Federal Register*, was dedicated to him.

DOT's final rule closely parallels the committee's report. Topics included in the ruling include definitions such as "qualifying persons: with disabilities, guidelines for issuing special license plates and removable windshield placards, establishing toll-free parking policies, and centralizing the authority to the state government to issue plates and placards.

The new ruling also recommends that states include in their statutes a section on reciprocity, to insure that states, cities, and counties recognize all special license plates and removable windshield placards.

The report pointed out a situation still apparent today: A variety of removable placards and markers are currently used across the country. Identifying the proper marker in the proper position has been a problem for enforcement officials. Some states require a placard hung from the rearview mirror, while others want it placed on the dash, and in a few cases, in the rear window.

Sizes and colors also vary. Many states use the common white symbols and leg-end on a blue background. Other background colors used by various states are red, yellow, orange, and green.

The new recommendations will help standardize removable placards. The size will be 3" wide by 9 1/2" long. Symbols and legend will be white on a blue background. Placards will be hung from the windshield's rearview mirror so they can be viewed from both the front and rear of the vehicle. When the vehicle does not have a rearview mirror, the placard will be displayed on the dashboard.

Although not included in the law, the states should be urged to take an active role in ensuring equal access to parking. The report suggested they should evaluate the feasibility of adopting a parking policy that would permit parking in metered spaces without cost or time limitations.

In January 1991 the PVA advocacy staff completed a telephone survey of various state Departments of Transportation. They found that many states have update their list of states with whom they have written reciprocity agreements, while others have revised their laws to include all vehicles from all states that display the proper state-issued license plates or placard.

Some states have legislated a policy pertaining to gasoline stations. Most full-service stations also have a self-service gas pump have a discount of 5-10¢ per gallon at that pump. The new legislation in many states allows the motorist with the proper handicap license plate or placard to purchase gas at the

self-service price, while having the full-service attendant dispense the gasoline. This is a welcome policy for disabled motorists, and it is hoped that more states will consider similar policies.

Most states were aware of DOT's efforts to publish uniform guidelines for handicap parking. The agency's Washington, DC, office received many calls from across the country asking about the new guidelines and their release date. DOT feels this was encouraging, since it indicated many states were looking for direction as they establish a new uniform system for handicap parking.

PARKING ADVOCATES ON PATROL

• In southern Louisiana, a PVA member has been busy working to improve the parking situation. After years of frustration from people abusing the handicap parking spaces, Donald Lepara, advocacy director of the Bayou chapter, decided to get involved in the struggle.

Lepara works full-time in an administrative position at the sheriff's department, but on the weekends he puts in hours as a member of the Quad Sad, a group of volunteers in wheelchairs who patrol the streets, public parks, and shopping area. The squad issues tickets to those who violate the handicap parking laws.

Lepara also spends free time lobbying many of his state legislators to improve handicap-parking laws. He realizes he still has much work ahead in his lobbying efforts to persuade the Louisiana lawmakers to introduce and adopt the new federal law during their 1992 session. "After Louisiana adopts the new federal law, we will work to further improve the state laws," Lepara says.

One issue that needs attention is in forming the medical community as to who qualifies for the handicap license. Too many medical permits are given out by doctors who are not aware of the government's definition of "handicapped." Lepara believes that when the medical community understands the qualifications, they will cooperate. He may try addressing this issue through newspaper articles and statewide medical publications.

Another major problem in Louisiana was the misuse of the placards by those other than the people they were issued to. Lepara says Louisiana now requires the placards to display the photograph of the authorized bearer. He urges other advocates to work with the legislatures to get this simple (but important) identification added to their placards. Requiring a photo on the placard or medical recertification for renewal would be a role best determined by the states.

• For several years Sandra Ellis, an associated member of the Arizona PVA chapter, has patrolled the streets of Phoenix, issuing tickets to handicap-parking violators. Lately she has another issue to campaign for: the universal handicap parking space.

Often a retailer or parking-lot owner will paint the handicap logo on a standard parking space. This does not make it an accessible parking space! Many businesses (and the government) follow the ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standard for space dimension (A-117.1, sec. 4.6.2), which call for the parking space to be a minimum of eight feet wide, with an adjacent aisle a minimum five feet wide. These standards do not always make a parking space accessible.

Working with the Phoenix Fire Department, Division of Fire Prevention Parking Administration Program, and the Arizona PVA chapter, Ellis helped design the universal handicap parking space. This space has larger dimensions and is safer for all disabled drivers and passengers. It requires a parking area of 11' and an access aisle of 5'. A great deal of testing has determined that these dimensions are the minimum for safe parking of cars, trucks, and vans.

Many vans have side entry with a lift, which makes it impossible to exit and maneuver in the standard-size space. This problem has plagued the side-door van owner for years.

Ellis and her group have developed and advocacy program, complete with an information package. They call their program Meet The Challenge of the '90's Campaign. The information package contains drawings, charts, and several chapters of text that document the need for this new parking space. It has been presented to many city and state governments and was mailed to 33 PVA chapters for consideration. The program also was offered to ANSI and the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board with hope they will adopt this safer parking alternative.

For information on the universal parking space, contact Sandra Ellis, Fire Department, Parking Administration Program, 620 West Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85003. (602) 256-3385.

• This article appears in the "Paraplegia News", May 1991

have sustained a traumatic head injury, their families and friends, as well as health care professionals who work with people who have had head injuries. Membership in the organization is open to anyone who is interested.

The Purpose of the organization, according to McCulloch, is to increase awareness of the consequences of head injury and the unique needs of those who have sustained such an injury, to provide information and resource services for head injured persons and others who are interested, to provide support for head injury survivors and their families, to foster a head injury prevention program, and to raise funds to support research and training.

Persons desiring information about the conference or the Montana Head Injury Association may contact John McCulloch at 586-6206.

INDEPENDENT LIVING IN MONTANA: COMING OF AGE IN THE 90'S

On September 18-19, 1991, SUMMIT Independent Living Center in Missoula, in conjunction with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is sponsoring a two-day conference which is focusing on individual and systems advocacy, community development strategies, coalition building and networking. The key speaker will be Jim DeJong, Executive Director of the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois.

The conference will be held at the Village Red Lion Inn, 100 Madison, in Missoula. For more information, call Jude or Barbara at SUMMIT. The number is either 728-1630 or 1-800-843-9655. Travel stipends for consumers are available on a limited basis. Contact SUMMIT for further details.

ANNUAL MAR CONFERENCE

Montana Association for Rehabilitation is holding its annual conference this year at the Radisson Northern Hotel in Billings, September 25-27, 1991. This year's theme is "Matching Services with Needs." Also in conjunction with the conference will be a pre-conference workshop on "Access USA." The Keynote speaker will be Lee Bussard of the Pacific Institute in Seattle. Additional speakers and presenters are Dr. Linda Christiansen on Psychological Aspects of Chronic Illness and Dale Sattler from Access USA.

There is a registration fee for both the conference and the pre-conference workshop. For more details contact Mike Hagen at Saint Vincent's Hospital in Billings at 657-7078.

MONTANA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

You are invited to join us in celebration at our picnic & fun day. Opening ceremonies will begin at 1:00 p.m.. Lunch will be served by the Butte Mile HI Lions at 1:30 p.m.

Tenth Anniversary Celebration

August 3rd, 1991

12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sheepshead Mountain Recreation Area's

Freedom Point

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NEW 800 NUMBER! PLEASE NOTE AND HANG ON FRIDGE!

MILP has a new toll-free number! It's **1-800-735-MILP (6457)**. If you have difficulty remembering numbers, just remember **735-MILP**. It's that simple.



1-800-735-6457

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION GRANT UPDATE

As of December 1, 1991, MILP is implementing its planning year with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to improve health and related services to rural Montanans. The grant, designed to use one year to plan and three years to implement innovative services and means to finance the services, will encompass the fourteen counties MILP services.

On January 15 - 20, 1991, Zana, Kathy, and Tim were in Washington, D.C., for training sponsored by RWJ staff and staff from ILRU in Houston. All twelve centers which received Foundation grants were at the training. It was a good opportunity for us out here in Montana to see that what we are doing is consistent and of the same quality as other ILCs. The next item on the RWJ calendar is an introductory session for the grant advisory committee in Butte, March 11 - 12.

During the planning year, we will be involving consumers to gather input regarding existing services, gaps in services, and ideas on how to close those gaps. MILP will be quite busy over the next few months as we implement the RWJ grant and continue with other activities. Stay tuned. We will keep you informed about our progress.

CRISIS IN ATTENDANT SERVICES

Perhaps the single, most important issue facing people with disabilities today concerns attendant services. Options for living independently are often dictated by the availability of attendant services. Personal assistance programs first appeared in the late 1950's. However, the majority of attendant service programs available today were started after 1980. Many states are still struggling to improve their services. Only a small percentage of people who are disabled get public supported assistance.

A few states offer services for disabled workers. About a third provide a full range of services. Programs vary from as few as three hours per week up to as many as sixty-seven. Figures from the U.S. Census show that approximately 7.8 million people need personal assistance. Only ten percent rely solely on paid providers and another eleven percent rely on a combination of paid and volunteer. This means that eight out of ten must survive on strictly volunteer help. Of those who pay for services, about half receive public subsidies. The rest pay out of the pocket.

In many states, people with disabilities face a confusing maze of agencies which overlap and often conflict their responsibilities. Oregon's In-Home Service Program is one exception. One state agency does assessments and determines whether applicants for assistance should enter nursing homes or are capable of living independently with in-home services. With central coordination of services, fewer people have been referred to nursing homes, thus offering a tax savings to Oregon's residents. In California until recently, such assessments were left up to individual counties and people with dis-

abilities forced to move to different counties to receive adequate services. That state now has a uniform assessment procedure.

Some states are beginning to shift away from the medical services approach to personal assistance, allowing people who are disabled greater control in managing their assistance. Several states offer a choice of service providers, such as Pennsylvania, Texas, and California. Offering a choice is important to serve different needs of people with disabilities. By allowing people to hire their own attendants, a state can also eliminate overhead costs of a home care agency, which can cut into funds for services. However, there will be a need for agencies that hire and refer attendants for people who are unable to manage their services on their own.

There is another problem which needs attention as well, that of the lack of resources to build up an adequate pool of qualified personal assistants. Due to a number of issues, such as poor wages, odd working hours, and stressful conditions. Some states are trying various alternatives to alleviate the problem, such as New York's Personal Care Services Program which seeks to attract assistants by pay increases and by guaranteeing a weekly salary for emergency and relief work. California is considering basing wages on experience for workers who assist people with severe disabilities.

Returning to work can jeopardize benefits in the majority of states. Only very few will encourage return to work without cutting benefits. In many cases, people with severe disabilities cannot work without personal

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CRISIS

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assistance. Since as many as two out of three people who have disabilities do not work, loss of benefits appears to be a contributing factor to high unemployment among the disabled.

In October, 1990, the independent living centers in Montana held public forums around Montana to gather input from consumers concerning the state of the art attendant services in our state. Some of the concerns brought up in forums were: low pay for attendants; lack of qualified attendants, especially in rural areas; threats to pull services; a need for sensitivity training for attendants; a need for support groups for attendants; communication problems due to centralization of the services; quality of training for attendants is poor.



Medicaid Services Division is attempting to find viable alternatives to the personal assistance problem in Montana. A task force will meet to investigate such alternatives and advise the Division on different directions.

It's time in Montana that attendant services be available to qualified consumers in a consistent fashion across the state. MILP will participate with the task force and we urge you to contact our office with your valuable ideas and input. You can have a say in your future, and your present, too!

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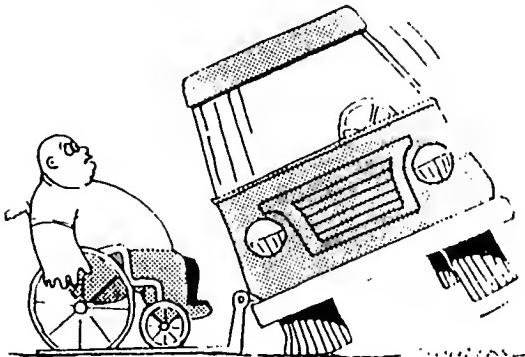
IS YOUR LIFT MAKING YOUR VAN UNSAFE?

by Dave Haake

Most cargo van chassis look pretty much the same. But there's more to look for in picking a full-size van for a lift than mere looks. The size of its springs and shocks and weight of potential conversion packages are important.

However, it's the vehicle's gross weight or load capacity that actually determines whether the van you pick is big enough and strong enough to serve your purpose adequately and safely.

That gross weight concept — total carrying capacity — "is the basis on which to buy a van for conversion" into a handicapped person's vehicular home, according to Karl W. Beck, sales manager for Braun Corp.'s Clearwater, FL office.



If a van has adequate GVW (gross vehicular weight), its springs will be strong enough to withstand the strain of lifting the handicapped person in a wheelchair. That lift strain is at its peak with the lift extended a full 36 to 42 inches from the van's side.

That leverage, Beck said, "causes the van to lean when the person in the wheelchair is getting into or out of the van. It's that force that can cause the springs to lean permanently. It also is why we recommend heavier GVW packages in vans."

"A light van won't make a good wheelchair van," Beck said.

"We recommend at least a half-ton van," Peter Ruprecht, president of Drive Master lift controls, told ACCENT Publisher Raymond C. Cheever, in a recent conversation on van sizes.

With most combined van, conversion and power lift equipment costs climbing to mid to upper \$20,000 or low \$30,000 totals, there's good reason to look at gross weights.

There's no sense investing money — yours or that of a state agency — in a van that won't hold up. Handicapped buyers or users have to be cautious because a listing van with a 1 - to - 1 1/2 inch give in its springs is not apt to improve. It could get worse and become unsafe to drive.

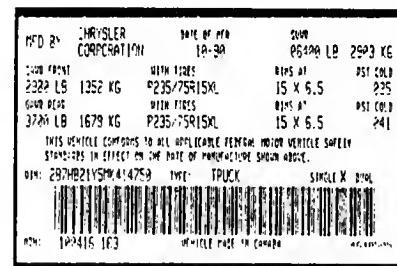
Volkswagen of America's Vanagon — in between the mini and full size van — is a growing contender for handicapped persons looking for van conversions. According to J.E. (Skip) Redman, U.S. Commercial and Recreational Products Manager, the vehicle has a 97-inch wheelbase, stands only 16 inches off the pavement, has a standard 58-inch floor-to-ceiling clearance — four inches more than a standard full-size van, and has a taller sliding side door. It can be purchased and

equipped with a lift for as low as \$17,500. He pointed out that the VW Cargo carrying capacity of 2200 pounds (5900 pound GVW less 3700 pound weight of vehicle when empty) is as much as in most full size domestic vans being used for lifts.

One example — the Ford, Model E150, (pkg. #2) has a maximum cargo carrying capacity of 1950 pounds. The Dodge will vary depending on whether the engine is six or eight cylinders.

To do the job right you should determine not only the GVW but the cargo carrying capacity or the payload rating of the van you are considering.

Metal plates listing a van's GVW (GVWR in Ford vans) and other vital information can be found on the driver's door post. Open the door and look to the right for the plate.



Look for the sticker inside the door on the driver's side (right). You can find the gross vehicular weight rating (GVWR) in the upper right hand corner of the sticker (above). This particular van weighs 6,400 pounds.

Braun's salesman recommend Ford Econoline, Chevrolet and Dodge Ram vans with gross vehicular weights of 6,000 to 6,600 pounds, but prefer the higher 6,500 to 6,600 pound GVW's.

Three of these vans (see accompanying chart) are half-ton vehicles. The other three and three-quarter ton vans. It may take a longer delivery time to get the vans with higher GVW ratings, Beck said.

Frederic "Red" Plank of the National Mobility Equipment Dealers' Association said Ford's half-ton, Econoline van is by far the most popular of the three manufacturers' vans.

We recommend its 6,500 GVW. It accommodates most lifts," he said, "and gives a decent ride with no lean to the right hand side."

Most unfinished cargo vans weigh 4,000 to 4,500 pounds. The addition of interior furnishings, windows and seats can add 500 to 1,000 pounds, depending on the materials used. Van lifts add another 180 to 325 pounds, Beck said.

The rest of the van's carrying capacity is available for its driver and passengers.

Heavier one-ton vans are not necessarily better, Beck said.

Those vans may not be acceptable for family transportation if there is too much excess carrying capacity.

In such cases, he observed, the ride would be similar to that of an empty truck. The handicapped rider and his family would find themselves "bouncing and wobbling with a rough ride."

If someone has bought a van with too small a GVW rating, it is possible to modify the rear springs to add extra payload capacity. Those modifications — costing up to \$600 in

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UNSAFE

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Florida - will vary in cost across the nation.

Mark T. Goodwin, Kewanee, IL offered the following guides in buying a van. Goodwin, a C4-C5 quad for 22 years, conducted a recent two-year study of the market before buying his van.

- How long has the conversion company been in business and how many and what type of vans have they produced?
- Do they have samples of their work to inspect?
- Will they provide names and telephone numbers of satisfied customers with disabilities similar to your handicap?
- Does the firm provide complete service after the sale?
- What kind of warranty terms do they offer? Will they make things right or are you stuck with the van if it isn't right?
- What is the firm's reputation on quality construction, service and living up to its warranties?

Vans Recommended For Lifts				
Ford Econoline Van				
Model	Pkg No	Size Van	Gross Weight (GVW*)	Recommended
E 150	1	1/2 Ton	5500	
	2	1/2 Ton	6100	Yes
	3	1/2 Ton	6500	Yes
E 250	1	3/4 Ton	7200	
	2	3/4 Ton	7900	
E 250 HD	1	3/4 Ton	8550	
E 350	1	1 Ton	9400	
	2	1 Ton	9500	
Chevrolet (GMC has same body and chassis)				
Model		Size Van	Gross Weight (GVW*)	Recommended
G 10 Series		1/2 Ton	4900	
		1/2 Ton	5600	
		1/2 Ton	6000	Yes
G 20 Series		3/4 Ton	6600	Yes
G 30 Series		3/4 Ton	7100	
		1 Ton	8600	
Dodge Ram				
Model	Code	Size Van	Gross Weight (GVW*)	Recommended
B 150	Z1A	1/2 Ton	5000	
	Z1B	1/2 Ton	5300	
B 250	Z2A	3/4 Ton	6010	Yes
	Z2B	3/4 Ton	6400	Yes
B 350	Z3A	1 Ton	7500	
Volkswagen (In between a mini and full size van.)				
Model	Code	Size Van	Gross Weight (GVW*)	Recommended
Vanagon	255	not classified	5900	Yes

* GVW stands for gross vehicular weight. It includes the weight of the van plus equipment and riders.

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MILP HIRES NEW IL SPECIALIST

On December 1, 1990, MILP hired a new Independent Living Specialist. Les Clark, a Montana native, had previously been employed with Montana House, a division of the Mental Health Services in Helena. During his six years at Montana House, Les managed a caseload of 15-20 consumers and was responsible for various units of the program. Although leaving Montana House was difficult, MILP's philosophical premise, to enable people with disabilities to live as independently as possible, making their own choices and taking control of their lives and the opportunity to focus on casemanagement persuaded him to make the change.

Les is an outdoor person, enjoying many different sports and activities. Some of his favorite are crosscountry and downhill skiing, swimming, hiking and bicycling. He's also an avid gardener and hunter. When asked how one harvests avids, Les declined to comment. He is married, has three children and two stepchildren.

NEW IL SPECIALIST (cont)

Les's position requires a good deal of travel which he enjoys, especially the rural areas where folks are extra warm and friendly. And maybe, he admits, its just the farmer in him, too.

MILP LINKS WITH SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

For the past four months, MILP has been serving as a volunteer station for the Senior Companion Program in Helena, which is operated by our local HRDC, the Rocky Mountain Development Council. Companions Thelma and Emmett Anderson and Floyd Mathiason work with four of MILP's consumers several days each week.

The companions provide a variety of services including assistance with shopping and home management, reading to visually impaired seniors and advocacy. They encourage their consumers to attend social events and to participate in recreational activities and often accompany them to these events. Most important are the listening skills and positive attitudes our companions display through their involvement with the program. We greatly appreciate our Senior Companions' efforts and support services with our consumers. Many thanks to Thelma, Emmett and Floyd.

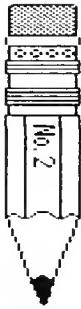
Stuff FOR SALE or GIVE AWAY

Ann Berndt of Great Falls has a like new hospital bed for sale. \$900 and its yours. It's at the Dearborn Apartments at 121 5th St. N. She can be reached at 453-0249 or 453-8752.

Sara Noe of Billings has a portable dishwasher she will donate. Call her at 652-1602 for details.

Mrs. Georgina McKee of Great Falls has a number of items for sale. An electric reclining wheelchair for \$7000; reclining commode chair - \$450; a Hoyer lift - \$750; a travel Hoyer lift - \$500; a scale to weigh someone on a Hoyer lift - \$75; and arm and leg exerciser which fits onto a wheelchair - \$100. She can be reached at 454-1054.

Pearl Scott of Billings has an Ivacare Aero Electric wheelchair with power recliner & elevating leg rests, adjustable height arm rests, and battery charger, all for \$998. Pearl's number is 656-4598.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Get your Magic Marker out and circle this date on your calendars: August 3, 1991
MILP celebrates our first decade (1981 - 1991) of service with a picnic at Freedom Point at the Sheepshead Mountain Recreation area in Elk Park northeast of Butte.

To the writer of "What's in a Name"

It seems like semantic trifling to put a pretty word on our disabilities, something like putting a cosmetic facelift on a truth which cannot be hidden under any amount of make-up. However, there is power in words (there's a whole linguistic science called Semantics), and wherever power is available, one is a fool not to use it.

Language is really the manipulation of symbols, it's art, it's a tool, it's a weapon. Most handicapped people are not impaired in their ability to speak and understand, least of all the deaf who don't speak much at all but have a beautiful command of their language. Name yourself in a positive way when you can, use the symbolism words allow you.

The public's perception is based upon symbols you use in your language, Madison Avenue and politicians know this best. A prime example of persuasive naming can be found in the battle over abortion: "A Woman's Right to Choose", "The Right to Life"; these words pander a covert editorial position just as if there was no debate, when, as we all know, the debate is great.

I hate to say my husband is crippled – it's so negative. He can't walk, but he's not crippled, he has his own business and he has employed up to forty people at a time either full or part time. He is an enabler – hardly disabled at all! We use the words handicapped and disabled without hesitation, but if I had a better word – more true to life (because our life is positive), I'd sure use it!

Montana Independent Living Project
38 S. Last Chance Gulch
Helena, Montana 59601

MT. STATE Library, Kathy Brown
1515 E. 6th
Helena, MT 59601

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